

# IMPART

## ESF-Learning Network IMPART

Increasing the Participation of Migrants and  
Ethnic Minorities in Employment

### Final Report



Federal Ministry  
of Labour and Social Affairs



EUROPEAN UNION

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Ethnic Minorities in Employment

## **Final Report**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMPART is a transnational Learning Network of 12 EU partners. From 2009 to 2012 IMPART has been looking at how projects which aim to increase the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment can successfully implement and mainstream their good practice. To do this, the Network needed to understand barriers that could limit the influence of good, well-funded projects on policy or practice.

Using a peer review method, with benchmarks developed by the partners and expert working groups from previous EU-wide experience, the work particularly focused on:

- **Theme 1 – Validating Migrant Competences:** projects where migrants are helped into jobs by getting recognition for their skills and abilities
- **Theme 2 – Fostering the Development of Anti-discrimination Skills:** strategies to help intermediaries and employers to reduce discrimination and other barriers to employment
- **Theme 3 – Integrated Territorial Approaches:** projects bringing agencies together in a defined geographical area to deliver a service or implement a strategy for migrant integration, including employment

One key feature of IMPART's approach is that its benchmark looks both at what the project can influence and the context in which it operates, over which it may have very little control. All projects, for example, faced the challenge of the economic downturn, especially as across Europe, migrant and ethnic minority unemployment is running at higher levels than overall unemployment. However, the support and strategies of local, regional and national authorities will have a major influence on whether good practice is mainstreamed and so this report makes a number of recommendations for policy makers and Managing Authorities as well as to projects. Some of the policy and funding implications are also of particular relevance to the Commission.

This report builds on findings from the ten peer reviews (also referred to as study visits) undertaken by the IMPART Network in 2010 and 2011. Several common issues were identified, which affected the chances of projects having long-term impact:

- Monitoring the impact of ESF-funded projects for long-term impact.
- Including migrants' 'voice' in ESF-funded projects to improve projects' delivery and strategy.
- Engaging employers, as well as supporting individual migrant participants.
- Assessing and validating migrants' skills to help them move into appropriate work.



- Having sufficient resources in place to mainstream good practice.
- Working with key stakeholders to improve projects' delivery and legacy.
- Ensuring that project outcomes will relate to relevant EU, national and regional policy frameworks.

The findings were derived from evidence collected by trained practitioners during study visits to ten partner countries and regions. These in-depth peer reviews of projects assessed their chances of getting their good practice fully implemented and mainstreamed. The IMPART methodology also proved an effective method for transnational learning between the partners, peers and projects themselves.

This report closes with recommendations for the Commission, ESF Managing Authorities and other funders, policy makers at national, regional and local level, projects and their external stakeholders.

To complement this report IMPART has developed a practical toolkit comprising a new modular benchmark and guidance on how to use it<sup>1</sup>. The toolkit will be useful for ESF Managing Authorities or other funders involved in planning and reviewing programmes, and for any projects which focus on enhancing migrants' employment.

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1 [www.impart.eu/](http://www.impart.eu/) <http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>

# 1. INTRODUCTION

IMPART is a transnational Learning Network with 12 partners from seven EU Member States<sup>2</sup>. It is funded by the European Social Fund (ESF) and runs from April 2009 to March 2012. IMPART aims to help the European Commission to understand how ESF funding can be used most effectively to increase the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in employment. ESF has already supported many projects in this area, but IMPART goes beyond identifying what is good practice to ask “how can we ensure that good practice projects will be fully implemented and mainstreamed?”

To examine this question, the Network developed three benchmarks. Each of them lists factors which make it more or less likely that a project will continue to have long term impact. Initial sets of these “critical factors” were identified by analysing the record of ESF-funded work in this field over the previous decade. The Network decided to focus on three themes and convened thematic working groups of experts from all the partner countries and regions to develop the benchmarks.

The three themes were:

1. Assessment and Validation: Valuing Migrant Competences: how migrants can be helped into jobs by getting recognition for their skills and abilities<sup>3</sup>
2. Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills as a Professional Approach: how advisers and employers can reduce barriers to employment<sup>4</sup>
3. Integrated Territorial Approaches: how agencies can work together in a defined territory to deliver a service or implement a strategy for migrant integration, including employment<sup>5</sup>

2 Andalusia, Aragon, Baden-Wurttemberg, Berlin, England, Estonia, Flanders, Germany, Greece, Scotland, Spain, Sweden

3 Benchmark Theme 1 (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

4 Benchmark Theme 2 (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

5 Benchmark Theme 3 (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)



Each theme approached the same issue of migrant and ethnic minority employment from a different but complementary perspective. Importantly, IMPART also looked at the context in which a project takes place, including factors over which it may have little control, such as the funding available, stakeholders' responses or the public policy context.

A baseline report was prepared on each country and region, providing background information on changes in population and employment; policies and legislation on migrants' rights; and equal opportunities. It also covered each country's or region's priorities for ESF funding and their allocation of funds on migration and integration. These baseline reports are also available on the IMPART website<sup>6</sup>.

Practitioners from different countries were trained to look at one or more projects against one of the thematic benchmarks in a structured 'peer review'. The reviewers are called 'peers' or equals, because they have similar experience to colleagues they visit. Their role is not to judge how well projects perform, but to understand which factors affect projects' chances of getting their good practice fully implemented and mainstreamed.

In each 3.5 day visit, a team of four to eight peers compared each project's experience with the relevant benchmark, interviewing project workers, partners and stakeholders to see if the critical factors were in place or not. They also looked at documentary evidence offered by the project. Detailed findings were brought together in a report, showing to what extent the project matched each critical factor and the benchmark as a whole, with recommendations for the project, host partner and funders.<sup>7</sup>

This report draws common findings from ten such peer reviews which were carried out in 2010 and 2011: for Theme 1 in Berlin (Germany) and England; for Theme 2 in Flanders (Belgium), Estonia and Scotland; and for Theme 3 in Andalusia and Aragon (Spain), Baden-Württemberg and Munich (Germany) and Sweden.

<sup>6</sup> Baseline reports (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

<sup>7</sup> Findings reports (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

The report begins in Section 2 by placing the work in the current EU context for integration of migrants, in particular the Agenda for Integration, the future growth strategy and future plans for ESF funding.

The report then looks in more detail at the value and effectiveness of IMPART's structured peer review process, particularly in a transnational context. In December 2011 IMPART thematic working groups, peers and partners met to review and revise the benchmarks. A combined "modular" benchmark was developed with core critical factors relevant to all projects working for the employment of migrants, and extra modules on each of the original themes. This is reproduced in the IMPART toolkit, which complements this report<sup>8</sup>.

Section 4 then outlines findings that relate to common issues and challenges which arose across most of the peer review visits. Here we are asking not about the whole combination of factors that make up the benchmark, but about particular issues that seem likely to have some policy significance because they cut across at least two of the IMPART themes and several of the projects we visited.

The report closes with conclusions and a number of recommendations for key actors, including the Commission, ESF Managing Authorities and other funders, policy makers at national regional and local level, projects and their external stakeholders.

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8 Toolkit (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

## 2. THE EU POLICY AND FUNDING CONTEXT

IMPART has stressed the importance of the socio-economic and political context in which a project operates in determining how successful it will be in having a longer term impact. Through the country baseline report and the project's self-assessment against the benchmark, this context was taken into account during peer reviews. The transnational partnership itself, operating from 2009-2012, regularly considered the implications of the prolonged economic downturn and changing migration and employment patterns in Europe.

Current EU debates on the integration of migrants and ethnic minorities into the labour market centre around three main issues:

- Firstly, persistent labour market inequalities are encountered by migrants and ethnic minorities who generally experience far greater levels of unemployment than the majority population, receive lower average wages, and are over-represented in the least desirable jobs.
- Secondly, the economic downturn in some EU Member States disproportionately affects migrants and ethnic minorities. Those with the lowest levels of qualification and skills are most vulnerable to losing their jobs and have less opportunity to re-enter the labour market.
- Lastly, the EU continues to face the long-term prospect of skill and labour shortages. With a shrinking workforce, inward migration and increasing numbers of young people from ethnic minorities in urban centres provides one of the main sources of population and labour force growth.

Many of these issues have been highlighted in the Commission's 2011 Communication on the European Agenda for the Integration of Third Country Nationals, which points to stark challenges around the integration of third country nationals. These include low levels of employment, especially for migrant women; rising unemployment and gaps in educational attainment; an increased risk of social exclusion; and public perceptions that migrants are insufficiently integrated within their host communities.<sup>9</sup>

9 [http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/110720/1\\_EN\\_ACT\\_part1\\_v10.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/news/intro/docs/110720/1_EN_ACT_part1_v10.pdf)

This Communication on the European Agenda for Integration also recommends that Member States should take action on a number of issues which have been the focus of IMPART's work:

- “Measures to map and assess the individual’s needs and to validate qualifications and professional experiences;
- Measures to implement in practice the principle of equal treatment and to prevent institutional as well as everyday discrimination;
- Increasing labour market participation of migrants through active labour market policies;
- Comprehensive integration strategies designed and implemented with the effective involvement of all local and regional stakeholders with a ‘bottom-up’ approach.”

In the EU’s growth strategy for the next decade, Europe 2020, migrants are identified as a target group in two key ways. Firstly, the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs aims “to bring to 75 per cent the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 by 2020 including through the greater participation of youth, older workers and low-skilled people and through the better integration of legal migrants.” Secondly, the 2020 social inclusion aims which set out “to achieve a target of 20 million fewer people in or at risk of poverty and social exclusion”, among them a high proportion of migrants<sup>10</sup>.

ESF remains a primary mechanism for realising these Europe 2020 targets, both in being a permanent feature of the EU’s Employment Strategy, and in its continuing focus on supporting active labour market measures in Member States. Recent regulations for ESF 2014 -2020 have been further aligned with Europe 2020 targets to ensure Member States increase the impact of ESF and reach a critical mass. Key

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<sup>10</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm)

changes to ESF 2014 – 2020, which have potentially important implications for the labour market integration of migrants and ethnic minorities include:

- a greater emphasis on combating youth unemployment, promoting active and healthy ageing, and supporting the most disadvantaged groups and marginalised communities such as Roma;
- a minimum share of 20 per cent of the ESF budget to be dedicated to social inclusion actions and combating poverty.

ESF 2014 – 2020 also stipulates the following to enhance the implementation, impact and effectiveness of future ESF funds:

- a strengthened ESF budget, from €75 billion to €84 billion, and a minimum share of this budget to be targeted at three categories of regions: less developed, transition and more developed regions;
- the participation of social partners and civil society to be encouraged more in the implementation of ESF;
- better coordination of all funds. Member States will be able to combine European Regional Development Funds, ESF and Cohesion Funds to improve coordination on the ground;
- the introduction of ‘ex-ante’ conditions, which will need to be in place before the funds are disbursed. This includes a national strategy against poverty and exclusion;



- and greater support for social innovation, i.e. testing and scaling up innovative solutions to address social needs.

The context above points to the need among Member States for greater accountability, in order to maximise the effectiveness and delivery of ESF funds, and to remove barriers to labour market participation and inclusion for the most disadvantaged communities. This is timely not just because of the current economic downturn but also because of the continuing gap between the identification of good practice through ESF-funded initiatives and achieving longer-term progress in this field. The findings presented in this report indicate actions at EU, national, local and project level which could help mainstream this good practice and thereby strengthen the impact of ESF funding.

## 3. IMPART METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 The IMPART approach

Its innovative methodology is a key product of the IMPART Network. It recognised that good practice in the field of migrant employment is now well documented, and that the urgent question is: how can this practice be implemented, mainstreamed and sustained into the future? Adapting the well-known procedure of peer review, the Network decided to go beyond the traditional task of evaluating project performance to find out what conditions are needed to bring projects' good practice into the policy mainstream. Conversely this meant understanding barriers that could limit the influence of good, well-funded projects on policy or practice, for example by making it hard to scale them up or to sustain them once project funding ends.

First IMPART developed, for each of its three themes, a benchmark listing factors which make it more or less likely that an ESF-funded project will have long-term impact. These critical factors were derived from analysis of previous evaluations of ESF projects over the previous decade, and input from IMPART's thematic working groups. Crucially each benchmark covered not only features of the project's internal practice and management but also contextual factors – such as the policy or funding environment - which also affect the chances of getting its good practice mainstreamed.

Then in a series of study visits (see Introduction Section 1), trained peer reviewers interviewed a range of stakeholders - policy makers, migrants, employers and project workers – to see how far the critical factors were met. After each review a findings report set out recommendations for the project, stakeholders and funders. IMPART has produced a short film which shows the IMPART methodology in practice: including peer training programme, a peer review in progress, and the views of participants<sup>11</sup>.

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11 IMPART film (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

Three points about this methodology should be emphasised:

- IMPART peer reviews were not designed to assess the results of project activity. In particular, they did not measure the impact of a project or of specific activities on labour market outcomes for beneficiaries<sup>12</sup> or for the labour force more widely. Projects were nominated for review by Managing Authorities on the basis that their practice is already known to be effective. Taking this as given, IMPART goes on to investigate their prospects of getting it mainstreamed.
- Each benchmark was designed to apply as a whole to the experience of projects we reviewed, recognising that in real life their prospects of longer-term impact depended on any single factor or ‘strength’ but on a complex set of conditions. When looking at each of the critical factors in turn within the benchmark, peers were not examining them in isolation, controlling for other variables which might affect project outcomes. Instead, they aimed to find out how the factors work in combination. So IMPART can offer only limited insight into the influence of any one factor on a project’s good results, and such findings must be treated with caution.
- However large or small it is, a project operates within its socio-economic and policy context. This means IMPART peer reviews also examine factors which may lie outside the control of the project, as they can have a significant influence on whether it is mainstreamed successfully.

### 3.2 Peer review experience

**Quality of output:** The peer review methodology produces rich evidence. Peers found that the range of interviewees (e.g. project staff, beneficiaries, policy makers, employers and migrant groups), plus documentary evidence, allowed different perspectives to be compared and verified. Peers were surprised to find they could get

<sup>12</sup> In IMPART the term “beneficiaries” refers to the individual migrants who are the project’s target group, not the project or training provider that is the recipient of the funding.

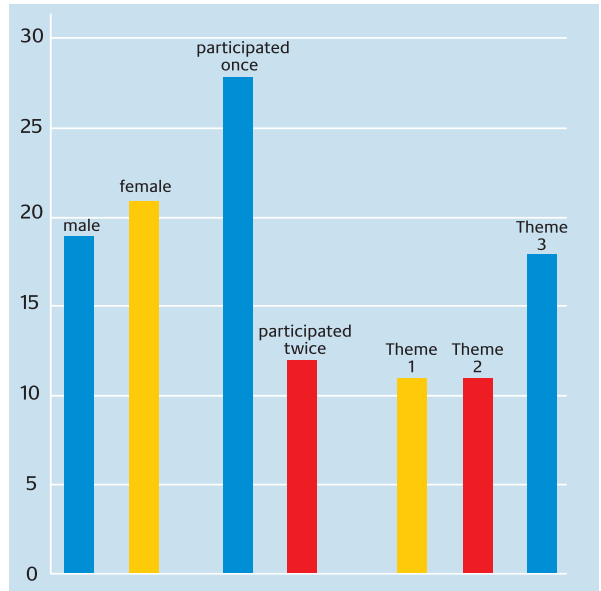


thorough insight into a project and its operating environment in a short visit, which included only 3.5 days direct contact with the project itself.

**Performance of benchmarks:**

The content of IMPART benchmarks has proved largely valid. Critical factors selected by the Network’s expert working groups in 2009 have almost all turned out to be important indicators of a project’s likelihood of being mainstreamed. In more than one peer review, critical factors which the project had initially considered ‘not applicable’ to its

activity were found by the peer review to be, in fact, areas where it differed from the benchmark. Its officers welcomed the final feedback by peers, pointing out how the project’s long-term development could be enhanced by addressing these issues.



IMPART peers by gender, participation and theme

**Amendments to benchmarks:** Though they performed well overall, some scope for developing and streamlining the benchmarks was identified by a Network Review Meeting held in December 2011 with partners, thematic working groups and peers. The three original benchmarks have now been revised into one modular benchmark, made up of

- a core benchmark comprising those critical factors which should be relevant to any project aiming to improve access to the labour market for migrants and ethnic minorities (including those actions which include employment only as one among a wider set of integration goals);
- three separate modules which set out additional critical factors for each of the three IMPART themes.

For both the core and the thematic modules, the benchmark structure has also been simplified making it easier for hosts and peers to identify relevant evidence, and for the benchmark to be translated into host languages where necessary<sup>13</sup>.

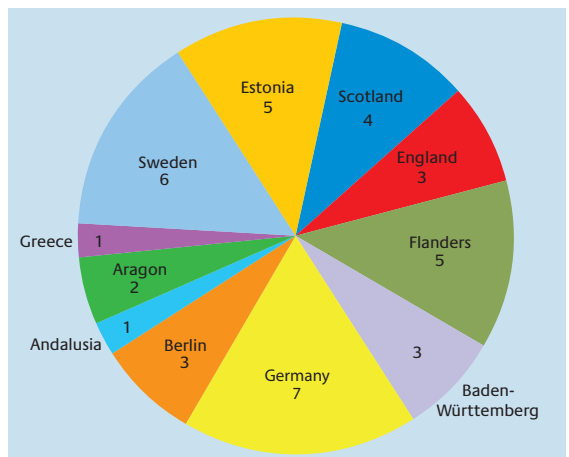
**Peer review challenges:** The peer review process is demanding both for peers and for projects, and steps were taken to ease these pressures:

- **Peers:** The short timescale adopted for IMPART study visits required peers in every case to work intensively for very long hours. The work load was addressed in the second year by adding more peers for each study visit.
- **Projects:** Relationships with the host project are crucially important for this process to work. The host project must feel that it is a partner in the IMPART peer review, helping to enhance understanding of the best way to use European resources. Though it is not an evaluation of performance, projects can feel they are being scrutinised and sometimes interviews can feel stressful. Our experience confirms the importance of full dialogue with projects before and through the visit, to address these concerns.
- **Transnational Learning:** IMPART's methodology for developing the benchmarks and the process of IMPART peer reviews has also demonstrated the benefits of a wider transnational network for learning.
- **Thematic working groups** The experts serving on the thematic working groups were able to draw on their policy, research and practical experiences to ensure benchmarks were as widely applicable as possible. This ensured that the critical factors, indicators and evidence sources were fit for purpose. The baseline reports, being fairly succinct and written to the same format, provided a tool for partners to compare their own policy and practice with others', developing a clearer understanding of the context and constraints within which they work.

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<sup>13</sup> IMPART Modular Benchmark (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)

- **Peer learning** Although their professional roles were similar to those of people they interviewed, peers came from very different social and economic contexts in a variety of Member States. They were therefore able to provide fresh perspectives and multiple viewpoints, both when pooling their expertise as a team and when feeding back to host projects. In several cases peers were themselves project leaders, policy-makers or employer representatives who then became interviewees when their own projects were peer reviewed, or vice versa. They all reported learning from the process, whether about the value of peer review methodology; new ways of addressing familiar challenges; or ideas they could take back to strengthen their own projects’ chances of long term impact. The overwhelming majority shared their experience and learning on return to their own country.
  
- **Host projects** all reported gaining insights that they had not been aware of before. In some cases the recommendations have been acted upon at a project level and in regional and national strategies.
  
- **Partners** have brought their peers together to share learning from different countries and to look at how they could use peer review methodology in evaluating their own projects. They have also mainstreamed IMPART findings more widely through workshops and networks and through considering how the benchmarks and findings can be used in setting criteria for their new ESF-Operational Programmes.



IMPART peers by partners' countries or regions

The central conclusion is that this transnational learning method proves effective. Comparing its EU-level benchmark or template in detail with a very diverse set of fourteen local and regional projects across seven Member States, the IMPART process has produced strong, new and practical insights into the conditions which allow EU resources to have maximum long-term impact. This successful performance suggests the IMPART peer review process may be an effective instrument for EU-wide use by the Commission and partners in coming years.

### **3.3 The scope of the projects reviewed**

The findings are drawn from ten peer reviews throughout the partners' countries and regions, whose projects are summarised below, in the order in which the visits took place. As some visits looked at more than one project, the total number of projects reviewed was fourteen. All of the projects aimed to improve the participation of migrants and ethnic minorities in the labour market, but focused on different themes.

The projects which were peer reviewed were very different in scope, ranging from national programmes to small projects seeking to make a difference in for a group of beneficiaries. Projects also varied greatly in the kinds of economic challenges they faced and in the migrant target groups they targeted, ranging from settled ethnic minorities to newly-arrived migrant groups.

City / Region / Country	Theme	Project description
Berlin, Germany	Assessment and Validation	<p>The peer review looked at three projects which addressed – promoting participants chances of gaining employment through vocational qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- documenting and validating the competencies of long-term unemployed adults, especially migrants</li> <li>- work between the service agency for post-qualification and partners to recognise and validate specific skills in preparation for the second chance qualification process</li> </ul>
Flanders, Belgium	Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills	<p>The peer review looked particularly at the impact of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mainstreaming a successful union-led project to promote the employment of migrants and ethnic minorities which had ended in 2005</li> <li>- the unions' role alongside other social partners in delivering the Flemish government's diversity strategy</li> </ul>
Andalusia, Spain	Integrated Territorial Approaches	<p>The peer review looked at two projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- an NGO working across Andalusia to provide advocacy and services for migrants, including training and employment advice</li> <li>- a local authority network at provincial level to exchange good practice and give technical support in promoting employment for disadvantaged groups, including migrants</li> </ul>

City / Region / Country	Theme	Project description
Tallinn, Estonia	Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills	<p>The project aimed to raise awareness of the value of multi-ethnic workforce and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- involved a media campaign about successful non-Estonians and a competition to find the most multicultural employer</li> <li>- developed and disseminated online materials to employers about equal treatment and how to integrate minorities</li> </ul>
Glasgow, Scotland	Fostering Anti-discrimination Skills	<p>The peer review focused on the project's employment engagement strategy, particularly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the role and contributions of different project partners</li> <li>- how the project prepares migrants for the workplace and the workplace for the client</li> </ul>
Baden-Württemberg; Germany	Integrated Territorial Approaches	<p>The project offers 'assisted vocational training' placements for people at a disadvantage in the labour market, including migrants, with intensive and sustained support both to the employer and to the trainee / worker.</p> <p>It is a joint venture by two major third-sector welfare bodies and applies an intensive training model. About half the total participants have migrant background.</p>

City / Region / Country	Theme	Project description
Aragón, Spain	Integrated Territorial Approaches	<p>The peer review looked at the participation process which has shaped a regional Immigration Integration Plan and informs work on its implementation. The Plan covers migrant employment alongside measures on other service areas. Two structures were reviewed, through which stakeholders contribute to it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a community organisation within Aragón's capital city</li> <li>- the region's Immigration Forum.</li> </ul>
Munich, Germany	Integrated Territorial Approaches	<p>The project recruits and trains migrant residents, mainly women, to work as 'pilots' (community mediators) in an inner-city neighbourhood. They help others of migrant background to make contact with key services and (if possible) to enter the labour market.</p> <p>Their work addresses the whole range of migrants' needs, and voluntary engagement is emphasised</p>
London, England	Assessment and Validation	<p>The project offers an intensive programme of support for workless Bangladeshi, Somali and Pakistani residents of four London boroughs. It offers: diagnostic needs assessment, individual advice and guidance, jobsearch support, employability training, and some access to training opportunities.</p>

City / Region / Country	Theme	Project description
Stockholm, Sweden	Integrated Territorial Approaches	<p>The project brings together City employment services and local offices of the national employment agency to coordinate work with unemployed migrants, so that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- their skills and training needs are fully identified</li> <li>- individuals are matched to job vacancies</li> <li>- migrants can move faster from benefits into work or study</li> </ul>

This report does not attempt to identify emerging issues for the three themes separately. Instead it draws out findings that cut across them, as we found a number of common issues emerged. This ultimately led to recasting the benchmark into a modular form, with a Core Benchmark and additional Thematic Modules<sup>14</sup>.

The projects differed enormously in their content, design and methods and in the social, economic and policy context where they worked. Findings about specific issues below should therefore be read as ‘headline’ comments that apply broadly to most of the peer reviews, but in different ways in each project and in respective partner states and regions.

<sup>14</sup> IMPART toolkit (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>) IMPART toolkit (<http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>)



## 4. OVERALL FINDINGS

The findings from the individual peer reviews demonstrated that the focus of each theme: Valuing Migrant Competences; Fostering the Development of Anti-discrimination Skills; and Integrated Territorial Approaches was relevant to the problems of enhancing migrant employment. The findings particularly showed the importance of actively involving a range of stakeholders if projects are to have wider impact. This means that the contribution of policy makers, migrant groups, employers, advisers and in some cases trades unions, as well as the efforts of projects themselves, are important components for funding bodies like ESF Managing Authorities or partners at a regional or national level to consider when commissioning projects.

This section draws out common findings from peer review visits that took place in Berlin, Andalusia, Flanders, Estonia, Scotland Baden-Württemberg, Aragon, Germany (Munich), England and Sweden. Across most or all of them, the following emerged as issues which should be addressed if ESF-funded actions on migrant and ethnic minority (MEM) employment are to be sustainable for the long term, with a good chance of becoming mainstreamed.

### Key issues

1. The scope of monitoring should extend beyond immediate outcomes for individual participants, to the sustainability of beneficiaries' employment prospects and the projects' wider impact on policy and practice in the longer term.
2. Programmes and projects need to include the 'voice' and views of migrants and ethnic minorities in a more systematic and structured way, to inform their design, delivery and evaluation.
3. Engaging employers must be more of a priority, given the importance of labour market access and outcomes for all these projects.
4. Resources may be necessary not just for projects to disseminate results, but also to prepare some basic infrastructure – such as investing in networks – that can support mainstreaming activity after they finish.

5. Involving key stakeholders in projects, including policy-makers, has to be seen not just as a way to build current support and improve delivery, but also as a step in preparing projects' long term 'legacy'.
6. Working explicitly within relevant regional and (especially) national policy frameworks, in ways that visibly champion their goals, will strengthen a project's chances of mainstreaming.
7. Projects with the sole or dominant aim of guiding individual migrants into job opportunities, should focus more on the assessment and validation of migrant competences as a necessary starting point in this process and should work with employers to make sure they can recognise migrants' skills and experience.

Each key finding and its implications are examined in detail below.

#### **4.1 Monitoring of ESF-funded work should be strengthened and should include looking at longer-term impact**

As a basic requirement of funding, all ESF projects monitor their activity with a focus on beneficiary outcomes while they are in contact with the project. What emerged across several IMPART peer review visits, however, was the importance of extending the scope of monitoring to look at the longer-term impact of ESF-funded work, at these two levels:

- individual: what happens to the beneficiary after their time with the project?
- mainstreaming: what difference does the project make to the evolution of policy – horizontally or vertically, either in the project's own lifetime or after it ends?

In nearly all cases, IMPART peer review teams were able to see data on individual outcomes within the project's own activity, together with case studies of individuals successfully progressing towards work:

- In **Baden-Württemberg**, peers saw evidence of longer-term individual outcomes since the project tracks its beneficiaries through a long period of combined training and employment.
- The community mediation project in Munich, **Germany**, not only monitored the progress of its own participants (pilots) intensively, but also tested the impact of their advice work in local communities by carrying out an anonymous household survey.
- In **England**, the project measured sustainable employment outcomes by tracking how many beneficiaries were in employment for a period of 26 weeks.

But data capturing longer-term outcomes were typically not available. In Berlin, we did not see data on the number of sustainable employment outcomes that had resulted from the projects' skills assessments.

In several 'Findings reports', peers recommended more regular and systematic monitoring of individuals' outcomes once they have left a project. This could mean actively following up on employment and training outcomes or continuing contact while the individual is in work or on training.

In other cases, peer reviews identified specific difficulties in monitoring the impact of the projects – not all of which were within a project's control:

- In **Estonia**, for example, it was widely acknowledged that measuring the impact of attitudinal change was a difficult task for a short term project.
- In **Flanders**, the project's data collection was hindered by a range of definitions and approaches to collecting statistics on migrants both within Flanders and across Belgium.

In many cases projects were not funded to collect information beyond that required for compliance with their ESF grant.



As several peer reviews made clear, ‘impact’ does not just mean quantifiable job or training outcomes. Projects noted that, for migrants and ethnic minorities, gaining appropriate employment may be a long-term prospect, so that ‘soft’ outcomes (e.g. increased confidence and self-awareness, improved personal skills) may be vital steps towards employment and an important part of a project’s overall impact. Often this calls for

intensive one-to-one support – rarely offered by mainstream services – which can be costly. Projects noted that ‘soft’ outcomes are typically the most difficult to measure. One project was working on its own qualitative indicators for capturing them and other frameworks were introduced:

- In **Sweden**, the project had adopted the ‘Open College Network method’ to develop – jointly with employers - a comprehensive set of modules to identify and enhance both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ skills among migrant jobseekers.
- Soft outcomes were recognised in the **England** project through the project provision, funding criteria and evaluation requirements.

Few study visits identified instruments that would allow projects or their sponsoring authorities systematically to monitor long-term impact in our second sense: that is, to assess how far these integrated territorial projects influence wider policy or practice, and become mainstreamed.

## Implications

Extending the scope of project monitoring may require a wider repertoire of techniques. Our conclusions from IMPART peer reviews point to the following steps which might enable projects, partner regions and states to monitor longer-term impact more fully:

- make more use of feedback from migrants themselves (including community structures) to assess results over time for the MEM target group;
- review methods for collecting data on MEM labour market outcomes, drawing on EU best practice to address related concerns about privacy and risks of stigma;
- address gaps in methodology for recording and assessing ‘soft outcomes’;
- consider how agencies and stakeholders outside each project might collaborate to monitor progress - beyond its formal project ‘lifetime’ – in getting its work mainstreamed into the policies and practice of public authorities, employers and other key actors;
- agree frameworks (see IMPART benchmark) which partners can use to help assess a project’s progress into mainstream policy and practice.

### **4.2. More systematic ways of including the migrant voice are needed to improve the quality of projects and develop their strategies**

One issue emerging across the initial IMPART peer reviews is the importance of migrants’ voice: that is, to what extent projects engage with migrant and ethnic minority (MEM) individuals or communities, and how they make use of feedback, commentary and information from this target group.

Critical factors relating to migrant engagement were at least partially matched in most of the ten peer reviews. However this was not necessarily sustained through all stages of a project or was not consistent:

- In the case of **Flanders** migrants' representatives were among the key social partners consulted on the government's Diversity Commission but peers noted they had less involvement in planning or delivering training courses or developing diversity plans.
- In **Estonia**, role models from minority communities told their stories in media campaigns to increase tolerance. However, migrant groups were not involved in the planning, delivery and monitoring of the project.
- The project reviewed in Munich, **Germany**, was focused on making contact with isolated and excluded migrants through its well-trained pilots. But its ultimate target group – the local migrant population – was hardly represented in its governance and, as the project had little dialogue with these communities.
- While 'including the migrant voice' did not feature as a critical factor for Berlin Theme 1 of the benchmarking toolkit, the Berlin peer review suggested that projects here could draw on migrant feedback more systematically to improve the quality of their work.

The issue is raised by several aspects of the Theme 3 benchmark:

- Our visit to **Andalusia** confirmed a clear policy commitment to the principle of migrant engagement and feedback. But in practice they appeared to play a limited role in evaluating and developing the work of the two projects we reviewed. One obvious reason is that mass immigration is very recent so communities have had less time to develop representative structures. Our review suggested that stronger migrant 'voice' might be a real help to the network in developing a local needs assessment.

- **Aragón** authorities have already taken ambitious steps to engage migrant residents and organisations in their integration work, including a regional Immigration Forum created by law with migrant community members. The peer review suggested however that sustained support is needed to keep such structures representative.
- In **Baden-Württemberg**, the Theme 3 peer review looked at a long-established project offering on-the-job ‘assisted training’ for young people at a disadvantage in the labour market, including migrants. Whilst it carefully records the experience of its own beneficiaries within its programme, the project has not sought input from the migrant target group more widely. Our peer review pointed out that wider feedback from migrant communities could offer the project a valuable challenge, helping it to define a strategy for future development.

Across these ten peer reviews it was felt that projects could be more active not just in getting feedback from migrants as they delivered services, but also in getting their views afterwards about their experience. The wider migrant population could be consulted before projects are launched, to find out directly about their needs; and as the project develops, to help assess the value of the project for individuals and communities.

Including the migrant and ethnic minority voice could also help to clarify the needs of particular groups within these populations, such as older workers and women. There was not enough cross-cutting evidence from peer reviews to comment on implications for particular age, gender or ethnic minority groups. But it was clear that, to provide relevant and effective provision, projects needed to be responsive to the distinctive challenges their target groups face in gaining employment.

One fundamental message from these peer reviews is that the migrant voice needs to be included for a purpose, and not just for its own sake. In some projects migrants were consulted in different ways and at different stages, but it was not entirely clear what the outcomes were, or why they were included in some stages and not others.

## Implications

Two main implications arise from these observations on migrant voice:

(I) To get specific and concrete benefits from migrant input, projects need a clear rationale for including it, which should spell out

- why they want to take this step, and which purposes MEM input will help to fulfil e.g. pre-project needs assessment, monitoring/evaluating project activity, guiding development of strategy, building stakeholder relations, showing progress towards mainstreaming;
- how it will add value to their work
- which migrants or minority groups they need to consult
- at what stages they intend to involve migrants

(II) More work is needed on the general question: how and where can migrant voice do most to enhance the quality of projects and their chances of achieving long-term impact? These issues are still not fully understood, and the Commission or national authorities may want to consider an initiative to explore them.

### **4.3 Engaging employers in projects is important in improving migrants' access to employment**

The need to engage employers more actively in projects emerged as a cross-cutting issue, confirming evidence from many other research studies in Europe and elsewhere. This arose particularly for Themes 1 and 2, where the challenges of validating competencies and fostering anti-discrimination skills deal centrally with the way employers relate to migrant labour.



In some cases, such engagement was already well developed:

- In **Berlin**, the project had made good progress in establishing links with employers and in using this as a way to improve the opportunities for migrants to enter work or gain valuable work experience.
- **Flanders** supported employers to develop Diversity Plans by funding Diversity Consultants, some of whom were trade unionists and could take shop floor workers' ideas and issues to management as well as training their members.
- The **Scotland** project's employer engagement strategy included a range of measures, such as employers advising on industry-specific language courses; briefings for employers and their staff before they hosted work placements; employers giving clients interview practice; and the project giving one-to-one support to the client and the employer during work placements.
- In **Estonia**, the employment of migrants was promoted through personal stories of successful migrants in the press, radio and a business paper, which also ran a government-sponsored competition for employers championing diversity in their workforce.

Employers in Theme 2 projects reported a number of benefits, including addressing skills shortages, developing managers' recruitment skills and better understanding of their own staff and customers from a migrant or ethnic minority background.

Theme 3 on integrated territorial approaches (which may cover a range of objectives besides employment) does not focus on engagement of employers as such, looking at it only within a wider discussion of the role of local and regional actors in forming partnerships. Nevertheless the importance of dialogue with them was clear under this theme:

- In **Aragón**, employers concerned to increase regional labour supply had lobbied the Aragón government actively to introduce the original version of its

Immigration Integration Plan with far-reaching potential to enhance economic opportunities for migrants, and they are represented in its Immigration Forum.

- Although the review in Stockholm, **Sweden**, showed that employers' associations were still not consulted systematically about the project's direction and development, individual employers had been actively involved in its initial design phase and collaborated closely with it to help to steer migrants to job opportunities.
- The **Baden-Württemberg** project had striking success in working with people at disadvantage in the labour market, based upon a very close three-way relationship developed over a long period between the project, beneficiaries and participating employers.

In all three themes we found examples of employers who had been active partners in projects over a number of years. Benefits for employers that were noted during the peer reviews included filling vacancies in the care and transport sectors where there were skill shortages; improved workplace relationships between indigenous workers and new migrants; development of human resource staff skills by being involved in mock interviews with applicants from a minority background; and employers contributing to the design and content of training courses and skills assessments, so they are relevant to the real working environment.

Case studies were promoted to other employers through websites, journals and in conferences; however, promotion of good practice through using employers' own networks was rarely used. Less tangible impacts included gaining better understanding of migrants' and minorities, so an employer's products or services could be tailored to them, and developing staff's intercultural understanding, although evidence of the impact on recruitment or HR practices was patchy.

But recommendations from several peer review Findings Reports show scope to develop employer engagement further, in order to improve the impact on migrants' employment chances and to move employers from awareness of the issues to changing their practice.

- In **Berlin**, it was felt that more active employer engagement among small to medium-sized employers could yield more work placements and trials and more employer involvement in training courses.
- Finding pathways to employment for migrants was a central goal of the project in **Munich, Germany**, whose pilots' success relied on their use of local connections. Yet the project had so far made no formal links with employers' associations in its area of the city.

In more than one country, there was still evidence of lingering prejudices against certain groups of migrants or ethnic minorities, and which suggest that discrimination at work needs to be actively addressed in joint work between project organisers and employers.

- The **Scotland** project ran briefing sessions for employers and their staff to raise their awareness of relevant legislation and the issues facing refugees and other recent migrants.
- The project organisers in **England**, for example, worked with employers and psychologists in the past to address employers' personal prejudices against employing people with a migrant or ethnic minority background.

## Implications

(I) Employer engagement is critical because migrant and ethnic minority participation and retention in employment cannot be increased without addressing barriers on the employer side. A focus exclusively on the “supply side” – support to beneficiaries – could be regarded as a weakness in project design.

(II) Many ESF projects find it difficult to engage employers, but the projects reviewed by IMPART have demonstrated several ways of doing so. However long-term funding proves vital to sustain this engagement because projects need time to develop relationships and understand the employer perspective.

(III) Our interim findings show that employers benefit by engaging in such projects. Managing Authorities and the Commission could promote examples of these benefits, and consider how funding could be structured to encourage employer participation.

(IV) In many cases, employers were engaged to some extent but showed limited intercultural understanding, or even discriminatory attitudes, for instance in recruitment and HR practice. Projects will need to strengthen the scale of their employer engagement strategies, and develop new approaches to help employers move from awareness to action.

(V) Guidance and recruitment professionals can play a greater role in the interface between clients and employers. Where there is strong membership of trade unions, equally, they can play an important intermediary role.

(VI) Mainstreaming opportunities could be enhanced by projects working more actively with employer networks, federations or trade associations, or with human resource professionals' networks. These can be effective routes to reach small employers and, more generally, can extend a project's impact beyond those actively involved in it.

#### 4.4 Assessing and validating migrant competences is an important first step in improving migrants' access to employment and in shaping project provision

For projects designed to support individual migrants in their journey towards employment, the starting point will often be assessing and validating their competences. This makes it possible to take stock of valuable skills which migrants and ethnic minorities already possess, and helps to shape project strategies for their further progress towards work and training.

While all the projects in Theme 1 visits provided skills training, they were doing much less to assess and validate the competences that MEM groups might already possess. For example, only one of the four projects that were peer reviewed in London and Berlin offered participants the option to adapt existing qualifications, or to re-qualify.

However, none of the remaining three projects were involved in adapting existing qualification and assessment structures to accommodate a broader range of skills and abilities that migrants might possess. In this way, any skills assessments that did take place were disconnected from any prior experience or skills the migrants might have gained. Similarly, the overall design of the project's strategies was not necessarily tailored to account for migrants' existing competences and skills.

Some of the Theme 2 projects addressed the same issue from the perspective of how employers could remove barriers. Some projects also looked at how they could give credit for migrants' prior learning and skills.

- Some human resource managers in **Flanders** were introducing competence-based job descriptions in order to improve migrants' chances of moving into jobs which better reflected their skills, experience and potential.
- In **Scotland** employers were encouraged to support those furthest from the workplace and were briefed by project staff on how migrants could get credit for existing competences. College staff worked closely with the health service to

ensure migrants' skills were utilised and they had opportunities to move into jobs where there were skills shortages.

One Theme 3 project also used recognition and validation of migrants' "hard" and "soft" skills to help them move into employment more quickly.

- In **Sweden** the project used Open College Network (OCN) based assessments to match migrants' competences to job opportunities, in close dialogue with employers who could offer vacancies. Peers heard that migrant users and their communities found this method better than conventional assessments. In the first 18 months of the project more than half the beneficiaries had found jobs.

## Implications

(I) Recognising existing competences is important not only in ensuring that a project effectively builds on these to move migrants closer to work, but also in ensuring that individuals can make the most of the skills they already have. Where these skills and competences have taken years of hard work to acquire, this work can also prove vital for a migrant's sense of self-esteem, confidence and motivation and ensure that such groups are not under-employed in low-skilled areas of work.

(II) The Findings Reports also highlight the importance of projects linking more strongly to work around re-qualification and to competence-based assessments which recognise a broader set of skills and abilities.

(III) The reports also recommended ways in which options to re-qualify and adapt existing qualifications could be considered by more projects as part of their wider work on skills recognition and provision. One important way in which this could be done would be by involving employers, training providers and those involved in qualification design to look again at systems of recruitment and assessment to see whether these could be changed to recognise a broader range of competences and skills. This would be particularly relevant for those sectors of the economy that are experiencing acute skill or labour shortages.

#### 4.5 Sufficient resources should be in place to mainstream good practice

Budgets for ESF projects would in general be expected to provide for disseminating their results. All the projects reviewed in Theme 2 developed a range of materials, methods and media to maximise the impact and reach of their work. But some projects peer-reviewed by IMPART in 2010 shared a concern about having sufficient resources to take their good practice actively into mainstream service provision, networks and policy-making processes. To achieve mainstreaming in this fuller sense, some projects, especially those delivered by relatively small NGOs, found they would need additional funding.

One aspect of this problem is highlighted as a critical factor in the Theme 3 benchmark: that is, the need to build up the capacity of key stakeholders to engage with the project, especially less-experienced partners (including MEM, third sector or other partners with a specialist or community-based focus to their work). While the benchmark focuses on activity during the project's lifetime, such capacity-building could also help to lay foundations for mainstreaming in the longer term – for example by developing local networks.

In fact, our Theme 3 peer reviews found few cases where projects had been able to take on this capacity-building role. Under Theme 1, the England peer review produced a similar finding. However there were instances where targeted resources were making an impact:

- In **Aragón**, the region's Integration Plan was a strategic initiative backed by substantial resources which were used partly to build structures capable of promoting the Plan's measures over the longer term. The two structures reviewed by IMPART were examples, including a district residents' association which was helping both to develop the Plan and to implement it.

Overall, our initial IMPART peer reviews show that an ESF project may face a resource deficit if it wants to go beyond standard forms of dissemination to tackle

mainstreaming in a more ambitious way – for example, enabling stakeholders to take forward its good practice after project completion and to promote this practice among their own networks, or to a wider circle of policy-makers and practitioners. Projects voiced concern that this constraint could be tightened because of the economic downturn.

The issue may arise particularly in regions and states where development of key networks has so far been limited, or the project's partners have limited capacity for this kind of development and promotional work (perhaps because migrant integration is a relatively new area of work).

The resource deficit may also be due to a shortfall in co-financing. Activities which go beyond the project's specified outcomes for its own participants – like forming a network as a longer-term 'legacy' - may require extra co-financing from sources other than ESF or other main project funders. Such sources could for instance include the labour market or integration budgets of national or regional authorities.

But financial resources and networks are not the whole story. Some projects may not see the case for putting effort into future mainstreaming, because they have powerful sponsors which are expected to take forward their practice. The community mediation project in Munich, **Germany**, had an adequate budget and worked in an area with long-established migrant communities as well as local bodies representing employers. But as a branch of a major third-sector welfare organisation, and with close support from both a federal government programme and the City authority, it looked 'vertically' to them to ensure its future mainstreaming rather than trying to create networks or alliances with NGOs, local communities or other stakeholders.



## Implications

The issues identified here could be addressed in the following ways:

(I) Earmarking part of the ESF funding allocation to projects for building networks, and possibly to prepare key stakeholders for a role in developing and promoting the project's practice beyond its formal end-date;

(II) Getting a commitment from project sponsors and partners such as public authorities, NGOs or employer bodies that they will take responsibility, from own resources, for this effort to build local networks and other 'infrastructure' which can carry forward the project's work for the long term.

(III) ESF funding may give opportunities to secure such undertakings. Some IMPART reviews recommend for example that ESF procedures could do more to highlight mainstreaming, by asking co-financing organisations to state how they would support it. Equally, funds could be structured to require projects to plan an impact or mainstreaming strategy from the outset.

### **4.6 Involving key stakeholders improves both projects' delivery and their long-term legacy**

A key feature of the IMPART method is that it looks at the project within its context, including factors over which the project itself may have little control. Almost all the good practice projects reviewed by IMPART felt it was important to engage a range of stakeholders. However, there was considerable variation in how far these links were formal or informal, and at what level (local, sub-national or national) they were formed:

- In **Berlin**, the largest of the three projects had the support of, and contact with senior policymakers within the State of Berlin which gave it greater profile and relevance within the sphere. The projects had also made contact with relevant mainstream state organisations, such as jobcentres. In both cases, there was potential for both horizontal and vertical mainstreaming arising from the projects.
- In **Flanders**, the Diversity Commission not only involved social partners such as migrant groups, employers and unions, but recommendations to the Flemish government had to be reached by consensus, which meant they were far more likely to be implemented. In addition the Union representatives whose previous ESF project had been mainstreamed could provide a direct link between shop floor workers and other key stakeholders. The benefit is not just to the project, but to all the stakeholders who are engaged.

Engaging policy-makers in the project's development is a core issue in peer reviews under Theme 3. Its benchmark specifies this as a critical factor, and also asks how far elected politicians show political leadership for the work of the project:

- Both projects visited in **Andalusia** met these criteria in relation to local and regional policy-makers. One project's network in Andalusia was set up directly by local authorities in the province of Málaga, endorsed by their political leaders. The other, an NGO project, worked closely with the employment service of the Andalusia government.
- In **Baden-Württemberg** the project had a particularly strong relationship with policy-makers in the Land government: it was directly sponsored by them, and applied a training model developed over a decade jointly by the NGOs and the Land authorities.

In both these Theme 3 visits, success in engaging policy-makers was seen by peers as positive factor for future mainstreaming. However they also noted that to main-

stream effectively, projects might need to move beyond this focus on policy-makers at sub-national level to make contacts also at national level:

- In **England** there were strong links with key stakeholders at the local and regional level but scope to extend these to contacts at the national level.
- In **Sweden** the project had active support from a range of policy-makers at sub-national level, especially the City of Stockholm which created it. But it had difficulty in engaging the interest of national management in the State's employment service, even though its key purpose was to coordinate work with the city office of this service.

Aragón illustrated another dimension on which projects might aim to build mutual support, helping to safeguard their legacy:

- The two **Aragón** projects had close links with both the city and regional authorities, and also had regular contact with central government. But Spain's regions (Autonomous Communities) including **Aragón**, had no structured relationship horizontally with one another - even though some had well-developed integration programmes – so they might miss chances to share ideas and make alliances.

## Implications

(I) The importance of the context in which a project operates, and how it uses the opportunities to make strategic alliances, cannot be over-estimated. Without the involvement of key stakeholders, whether from the private, statutory or voluntary sector, a project's impact may be dissipated as soon as funding ends. This is not just a question of resources but of key stakeholders understanding the benefits of the project's approach through its lifetime. They are then more likely to champion its work subsequently, and to assist its mainstreaming in the organisations they represent.

Building up relationships during a project helps to ensure that key stakeholders understand the issues it addresses. It creates opportunities for projects working with migrants and ethnic minorities to develop the intercultural competence of mainstream organisations. Projects need to be able to devote time to this longer term impact as well as to meeting beneficiary targets.

#### **4.7 Working within relevant policy frameworks strengthens a project's chances of mainstreaming**

Persuading policy-makers at a level above the project that its practice can help to realise their policy goals is, of course, the key to vertical mainstreaming. So our initial IMPART findings naturally indicate that projects which align their practice explicitly with national or regional policy frameworks tend to have more potential for getting their work mainstreamed than those which did not.

- In **Flanders**, the fact that the original EQUAL project had been sponsored as part of the Government's longer-term Diversity Strategy, had improved its chances of being mainstreamed. As a result, the Government continues to fund the unions to work on migrant employment as part of the strategy, even though the project finished in 2005.
- In **Estonia**, the project, which aimed to raise awareness of the contributions of ethnic minorities to the workforce, followed within two months of the passing of the Equal Treatment Act, which enshrined European anti-discrimination directives in law. The project also contributed to the national integration strategy.
- In **Scotland** the project received funding from the Scottish governments equality unit and was also supported by its Fresh Talent initiative which aims to attract migrants to a country with a falling population.

- In **Andalusia**, the NGO project helped to deliver the employment goals of the regional government for the MEM target group, working closely with its employment service, while the other project was established by local authority officials themselves to help implement more efficiently the employment strategies of both local and regional governments.



Our Andalusia peer review

concluded that both projects had good prospects of long-term impact (subject to securing future funding, in the NGO case).

- The project reviewed in **Baden-Württemberg** was particularly well aligned with the strategic goals of its regional government, and was seen by policy-makers at this level as a key instrument for tackling labour market exclusion. This clearly gave it a good basis for extending its scale and territorial coverage in the long term
- For the project in **Munich, Germany**, alignment with the policy aims of its city, Land (state) and federal government was reflected in the funding it received from all three levels. This close fit between its practice and public policies at higher levels seemed likely to bring success in negotiations on future mainstreaming.

Connecting the project to policy goals at higher political level does not, of course, guarantee that a project's practice will be carried forward for the long term:

- The structures reviewed in **Aragon** were designed to support the Immigration Integration plan of its regional government (Autonomous Community). They

therefore expressed the policy goals of that authority, and a change in its political control could have put both at risk. The risk was minimised by engaging a range of other stakeholders with them and, for one of them, by writing it into law.

- The challenge of adapting to policies determined at higher level is illustrated by the project in Stockholm, **Sweden**, where the system of induction for new migrants was reformed by national legislation after it had begun work. Despite efforts to adapt to the new approach, the reform created tension between the aims of city and national employment agencies, posing a new challenge for the inter-agency coordination which this project was designed to build.

## Implications

(I) Findings Reports from IMPART peer reviews highlight the importance of linking a project to relevant policy frameworks at national or regional level, so that it develops within them, to give it the best possible opportunity for mainstreaming. Aligning the project with national or regional policies should also improve coordination between agencies in this field, avoiding duplication of work.

(II) Projects which contribute to the delivery of regional or national governments' policy goals are better able to make the case for sustained funding and more likely to have their practice mainstreamed. However, vertical mainstreaming requires projects which do not have the benefit of being sponsored by policy makers, to identify which structures can facilitate such influence.

(III) The reports also recommended several ways in which ESF funding criteria could encourage these policy links among projects - for example, asking projects at the bidding stage to identify how their work will contribute to policy development and wider national/regional strategies. ESF funding criteria could also encourage strategic initiatives which build on consensus and partnership working.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The IMPART Network has achieved strong learning outcomes at two levels: in its methodology, and in its findings about the most effective use of EU resources. As indicated by reports from its partners and practitioners who took part in its peer reviews, this learning had practical application already during the Network's lifetime and has potential to be applied widely in future.

IMPART methodology has made a distinctive innovation in the use of the peer review process. Going beyond the traditional aim of evaluating project performance, IMPART made peer review into a diagnostic tool which – for each project reviewed – could indicate its prospects of getting its good practice transferred into the policy mainstream.

Through its programme of study visits, the Network has shown that this method is an effective way of getting an in-depth understanding of the conditions which make for long-term impact, within a project and in its social and political environment. Most of the critical factors identified in IMPART's initial research and development prove to be relevant indicators of the likelihood of a project being successfully mainstreamed. In each peer review visit, moreover, the IMPART analysis pointed to practical steps by which the project could make this mainstreaming outcome more likely.

The IMPART method thus demonstrated the power of **transnational learning**. Developed by surveying a decade of EU-funded work on migrant and ethnic minority employment across Member States, and drawing on the shared expertise of practitioners from seven countries, the IMPART benchmark is a transnational model or template of the conditions that make for long-run success in this challenging field. Necessarily it is high-level and general. Yet IMPART has shown that this pan-European model, compared in detail with a very diverse set of local or regional projects across Member States, can deliver strong new insights into the conditions which allow EU resources to have maximum long-term impact.

This performance suggests that the IMPART peer review process is likely to be an effective instrument for EU-wide use by the Commission and its partners in coming years.

**IMPART findings**, generated by this process, come from a limited sample of projects but reflect in-depth dialogue between practitioners in each peer review, structured by the EU-wide benchmark. A striking convergence has been found between results from our study visits across the three IMPART themes and across the great variety of projects, activities and local conditions covered by the peer review programme.

The Network therefore concludes that its findings are robust, pointing to seven key cross-cutting issues which make the difference in maximising the long-term impact of EU funding in the field of migrant and ethnic minority employment.

The findings point to seven key cross-cutting issues which make the difference in maximising the long-term impact of EU funding in the field of migrant and ethnic minority employment:

- Monitoring the impact of ESF-funded projects for long-term impact.
- Including migrants' 'voice' in ESF-funded projects to improve projects' delivery and strategy.
- Engaging employers, as well as supporting individual migrant participants.
- Assessing and validating migrants' skills to help them move into appropriate work.
- Having sufficient resources in place to mainstream good practice.
- Working with key stakeholders to improve projects' delivery and legacy.
- Ensuring that project outcomes will relate to relevant EU, national and regional policy frameworks.



The last of these seven issues raises one of the biggest challenges facing the Commission and Managing Authorities: that is, the ‘implementation gap’. On the one hand this refers to the risk that known good practice is lost at the end of a project because it is not mainstreamed. But it also refers to the risk that EU policies, even if formally adopted by national governments, may not be carried through concretely in projects and services within Member States. Although IMPART peer review focuses on the first kind of gap, as discussed above, it also confirmed the importance of closing the ‘EU policy gap’. Cases reviewed by the Network show that

- models of good practice in the field of migrant and ethnic minority employment may quite readily be designed so as to deliver the goals of European, national and regional policy; and
- addressing such policy goals explicitly is likely to make projects more sustainable with greater long-term impact.

Overall, therefore, IMPART peer reviews showed that work on migrant and ethnic minority employment calls for a ‘project-plus’ approach. Funding projects in itself is not enough. The potential of a project’s good practice is most likely to be fully realised, when support is directed both to the individual project and also to the systematic development of its linkages with relevant stakeholders, communities and policy-makers in its wider environment, based on a clear understanding of their priorities.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To give effect to its general conclusions above, the IMPART Network puts forward seven specific recommendations. Though relevant to most ESF programmes, they should bring exceptional added value to work with migrants and ethnic minorities whose unemployment and under-employment in the labour market poses particular challenges, and has not always been recognised. The Network believes that its recommendations may therefore help actors at EU, national and sub-national levels to move towards key aims of EU policy, like those of Europe 2020's Agenda for New Skills and Jobs, and the Commission's July 2011 *Communication on Integration of Third Country Nationals*.

The following table then shows which actors – at which level – could most effectively implement each of them. They may wish to consider taking forward these proposals at an appropriate stage in the ESF programming cycle, particularly when new operational programme plans are being drawn up.

1. **Monitoring:** The scope of monitoring should extend beyond immediate outcomes for individual participants, to the sustainability of beneficiaries' employment and to the longer-term impact of programmes and the projects they support on policy and practice.
2. **Migrant voice:** Rather than being subsumed in other disadvantaged groups, the specific 'voice' and views of migrants and ethnic minorities should systematically inform the design, delivery and evaluation of programmes and projects – at all programming levels – so that
  - they become more visible and their specific needs are recognised;
  - intercultural competences are promoted;
  - the quality of projects is enhanced.
3. **Employer engagement:** Given the focus of these initiatives on labour market access and outcomes, engaging employers should have higher priority. Support for beneficiaries must be matched by greater attention to reducing barriers on the employer side, and making the business case for recruitment of migrants,

including its contribution to Corporate Social Responsibility agendas; tackling skill shortages; and improving the customer base.

4. **The formal recognition of migrant competences** is a necessary starting point in moving beneficiaries towards employment. Projects supporting beneficiaries should focus on the assessment and validation of competences when shaping their own provision and should also help employers give recognition and value to migrants' skills. This would ensure that a project's work effectively builds on the competences that migrants already possess and that migrants have the opportunity to make the most of their skills and get jobs that reflect their abilities and experience.
5. **Investing in networks:** Funding to projects should be sufficient not just to disseminate results, but also to prepare a basic 'infrastructure' of stakeholder networks which – beyond the formal close of the project – can champion its good practice and support activity to get it mainstreamed. Such infrastructure should in particular include networks of migrant and ethnic minority groups, to ensure their continuing voice in the mainstreaming process (cf. recommendation 2 above).
6. **Involving key stakeholders:** Key external stakeholders should be involved in developing and evaluating programmes and projects, not just as a way to build current support and improve delivery, but also as a step in preparing for long-term legacy. Stakeholders to be brought into this relationship should include policy-makers at local, regional and national level, as well as social partners and relevant NGOs in the MEM employment field.
7. **Aligning projects with EU and national policy frameworks:** To strengthen its chances of sustained funding and mainstreaming, work at project level should be aligned explicitly with the relevant policy frameworks of EU institutions, regional and especially national governments, in ways that visibly promote their goals and contribute to their delivery.

## Taking forward IMPART recommendations

Key issues		Actor	How recommendation might be implemented: suggested actions
No.	Issue		
1	Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Managing Authorities</li>   <li>■ National and regional authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider introducing systems to monitor MEM participation in ESF-funded programmes at national and regional level, including their employment outcomes, and feedback from migrant beneficiaries themselves.</li> <li>• Feed these data on migrant participation into the planning of future Operational Programmes.</li> <li>• Support the development of methodology to record and assess other benefits such as ‘soft outcomes’ of training and employment.</li> <li>• Review methods for collecting data on MEM labour market outcomes, drawing on EU best practice to deal with concerns about privacy and risks of stigma.</li> </ul>
2	Migrant voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Commission and Managing Authorities</li>   <li>■ Commission and national authorities</li>   <li>■ Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote the aim of recognising MEMs’ specific needs at all programming levels.</li> <li>• Encourage projects to find ways of including migrant views in design, delivery and evaluation.</li> <li>• Consider a research initiative to explore how and where migrant voice can do most to enhance projects’ quality and their chances of long-term impact.</li> <li>• Set out a clear rationale for securing migrants’ input, saying when and how they will be included.</li> </ul>

Key issues		Actor	How recommendation might be implemented: suggested actions
No.	Issue		
3	Employer engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commission and Managing Authorities</li>   <li>▪ Regional and local authorities</li>   <li>▪ Employer bodies, regional and local authorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote successful examples of how employers benefit from engaging in migrant employment initiatives.</li> <li>• Consider how funding could be structured to encourage employers' participation.</li> <li>• Promote anti-discrimination measures by supporting employers in steps to improve their intercultural understanding.</li> <li>• Where employers have already signed up to equality and diversity agendas, help them to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- move from awareness to changes in practice</li> <li>- develop the business case for a workforce with more MEM employees</li> <li>- promote the benefits to other employers</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

4	Assessment and validation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Managing Authorities</li> <li>■ Projects</li> <li>■ National and regional stakeholders responsible for skills provision and qualification design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage projects to include the assessment and validation of skills as part of their broader work on skills provision and support.</li> <li>• Consider the involvement of employers, training providers and skills agencies in broadening systems of assessment and recruitment to account for a broader range of skills and abilities.</li> <li>• Link the work of ESF-funded projects more strongly to national and/or European qualification frameworks.</li> </ul>
5	Investing in networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Commission and Managing Authorities</li> <li>■ National and regional government, NGOs and employer bodies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Request mainstreaming plans from projects, to include steps which co-financing organisations will take to support the mainstreaming task and resources committed to it.</li> <li>• Earmark part of the ESF funding allocation to projects' efforts to build local/regional networks.</li> <li>• Give commitment, as project sponsors and partners, that they will take responsibility for helping projects to build 'infrastructure' which can carry forward its work for the long term.</li> </ul>

Key issues		Actor	How recommendation might be implemented: suggested actions
No.	Issue		
6	Involving key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Commission</li>   <li>■ Commission and Managing Authorities</li>   <li>■ Regional and local authorities, employer bodies, NGOs</li>   <li>■ Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider how regulations could be used to better coordinate and combine the use of EU funding streams including eg ESF, ERDF, and the European Fund for Integration of Third Country Nationals so as to promote the engagement of stakeholders from across sectors in different stages of programme development and project activity, and interaction between them.</li> <li>• Adapt ESF funding criteria so that projects can devote time to developing longer-term relationships with local stakeholders as well as meeting beneficiary targets.</li> <li>• Engage with projects, identify key results and benefits from their work and develop joint plans to promote these benefits beyond the formal lifetime of the project.</li> <li>• Give priority to involving stakeholders and helping them to develop a role in future mainstreaming.</li> </ul>

Key issues		Actor	How recommendation might be implemented: suggested actions
No.	Issue		
7	Alignment with EU and national policy frameworks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Commission and Managing Authorities</li>   <li>▪ Commission and Managing Authorities</li>   <li>▪ National, regional and Managing Authorities</li>   <li>▪ Projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adapt ESF funding criteria, so as to               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- require projects at bidding stage to show how they will contribute to implementation of EU policy, and/or to national/regional strategies</li> <li>- encourage strategic initiatives which build on consensus and partnership working.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Review information strategy to ensure that projects are informed about relevant EU, national and regional strategies and policy goals.</li> <li>• Open channels for dialogue with ESF-funded projects, directly or via relevant regional forums.</li> <li>• Relate project design and delivery to these frameworks, and seek contact with national/regional policy-makers</li> </ul>



**Published by:**

Learning Network „IMPART – Increasing the Participation of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Employment”

Network Lead Partner

Senate Department for Economics, Technology and Research, Berlin

IMPART Technical Secretariat – Network Coordination

The Commissioner of the Berlin Senate for Integration and Migration

[www.impart.eu](http://www.impart.eu) / <http://www.berlin.de/lb/intmig/themen/thema06/impart.html>

This action is running under „Learning for Change – Setting up Learning Networks under the ESF 2007 – 2013” and receives funding by the European Commission.

**Layout/typesetting:** Graphic Section,  
Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Bonn

**Print:** Inhouse-Print

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